



## GUIDANCE ON MODES OF OPERATION

### for EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Areas

*based on the EUSBSR Action Plan (SWD(2021) 24 final) and approved by the National Coordinators Group on 11 May 2021*



## 1. Actions and Activities

Each EUSBSR Policy Area (PA) develops Actions, which contribute to achieving the EUSBSR Objectives.

Each Action is implemented through a set of Activities proposed by participating stakeholders.

## 2. Formats of Activities

The Strategy welcomes novel ideas and initiatives and aims to diversify the group of stakeholders, while building on and further developing those partnership structures which have proven most successful in delivering significant added value. Therefore, it remains open for Activities organized outside already established structures and there is flexibility in the format that Activities can take. Such flexibility is also required, as the needs of PAs vary significantly.

The format of the Activities implemented under each Action are decided by the PA to best suit the needs of the Action. Activities under an Action can be, but are not limited to, projects (single or grouped in clusters), processes, networks or platforms. There is no preference for one format.

PAs may continue to use the flagship concept. The decision on using the designation of flagship is taken by the respective PA Steering Group(s) (SGs). Prior to their decision to designate an Activity as a flagship, the SGs are recommended to notify the European Commission (DG REGIO).

## 3. Criteria for Activities

Each Activity must

- a) be related to the implementation of one or more Actions of one or more PAs as well as to their Work Plans;
- b) have a transnational dimension. It has to involve cooperation between at least three EUSBSR Member States (or at least two EUSBSR Member States and a neighbouring country);
- c) be able to be implemented within a realistic timeframe and/or have clear milestones, which can be monitored and evaluated;
- d) be the subject of regular reporting to the respective Policy Area Coordinator(s) regarding its main developments.

In addition to satisfying the criteria listed in points 3.a) - 3.d) above, a flagship must

- e) be aimed at implementing particularly essential parts of one or several Actions of one or several Policy Areas.

#### **4. Funding of Activities**

The funding for operations under the Strategy is intended to come from existing financial instruments. All funding sources have their own eligibility rules, selection criteria and implementation modalities.

The Policy Area Coordinators (PACs) facilitate the funding of Activities with the support of their SGs. They may utilize technical support from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme to initiate Activities and are encouraged to facilitate funding of Activities also from other financial instruments.

#### **5. Evaluation of Activities**

All Activities and co-operation formats are to be monitored and evaluated on the basis of their merits and added value in accordance with chapter 1.6 of the EUSBSR Action Plan.

The NCG endorses the overall monitoring and evaluation framework within the EUSBSR and ensures that it is published on the EUSBSR website.

#### **6. Annual overview of Activities**

The BSP compiles an annual overview of all ongoing EUSBSR Activities.